Reflections of the many identities of the service user researcher within the context of clinical psychology research.

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Aims of this presentation

- Who is the service user researcher?
- Why is service user and carer involvement important?
- What ways are people involved? (McPin foundation).
- How the research is an extension of the self.
- Separating the self from the research.
- Facilitating service user research (Examples from McPin foundation).
- Reflecting the real world.
- Conclusions
Who is the service user researcher?

- Who am I?
- Trainees who research an area related to their lived experience
- Researchers who research an area related to their lived experience
- The many identities within clinical psychology
- Service users and Carers involved in research
Why is service user and carer involvement important?

- Service users and carers have a better insight into what needs to be researched.
- This will make more of a difference to service user and carer lives.
- It makes research useful and purposeful.
- The research begins to reflect the needs of the population.
- Research accurately then begins to reflect and give insight into the real world.
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What ways are people involved?

- Design of the research
- Implementation of the research
- Analysis of the research
- Evaluation of the research
- Dissemination of the research
- The extent to which they are involved in these areas differs.
- This varies dependent on qualitative and quantitative nature of the research.
McPin Foundation: Co-Production in Action: Side by Side Evaluation

- **Side-by-Side** – 2 year peer support project led by Mind, Bipolar UK and Depression Alliance

- Promoting the value of peer support

- Principles and values – What makes peer support valuable and different to other types of mental health support?
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**McPin Foundation: Co-Production in Action: Side by Side Evaluation**

Peer researchers

- Advised on questionnaire design
- Co-produced interview schedules
- Supported the completion of monthly questionnaires on project sites
- Conducted qualitative interviews and focus groups
- Involved in data analysis and report writing
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How the research is an extension of the self

- The researcher’s identity is tied to the research.
- Expert by Experience (LExE member & Service user Advisor (NCAP)).
- Mental health professional
- PhD Researcher
- Lived experience and professional identity
- Gives a unique perspective and insight.
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Separating the self from the research

- Important to step outside of the research.
- View it from the periphery of each group identity.
- Movement on the continuum of subjectivity to objectivity.
- Awareness of unconscious bias.
- Conflict between researcher and service user identity.
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Facilitating service user research

• Facilitating an inclusive environment
• Training and Preparation
• Resources
• Professional identities versus Lived experience identities
• Give space for reflections
• Debriefing
• Acknowledging input
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McPin Foundation: Supporting peer researchers

• Support - essential to any kind of involvement work because:
  • Work can be emotionally close to home
  • People (including you) may hear difficult things
  • People may be managing chronic health conditions
  • Home life may be difficult

• Who in your team will be able to support them? (think about current skills and capacity of team)

• Who will support the supporters?
Experts by experience give insight into the needs of the population
Their research ideas come from their own individual experiences
Their experiences and research outcomes may more reliably represent the real world.
Individual unique experience.
However danger of generalisation.
Danger of using involvement as legitimizing research.
Danger of lack of research where no service user or carer experience is relevant.

Reflecting the real world

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Conclusions

Research should be a reflection of the service user and carer’s experiences and reflect the real world and this can only be achieved through effective involvement in every aspect of the research.